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TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#)
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE AWARD: ATHENS'
NOMINATION

REF: STATE 12871

¶1. Embassy Athens nominates Prof. Eleftheria A. Bernidaki-Aldous for the Secretary's International Women of Courage award for 2007. Per instructions from reftel, our justification along with her biographic and contact details are as follows:

NAME: ELEFThERIA A. BERNIDAKI-ALDOUS
TITLE: Member of Parliament
INSTITUTION: Parliament of the Republic of Greece
DATE OF BIRTH: Approximately 50 years of age
CONTACT INFORMATION: 4 Voulis Street, Athens, 10562, Greece
TELEPHONE: (30)-210-370-6602 or (30)-210-324-0117
E-MAIL: e.bernidaki-aldous@parliament.gr

Post's Officer handling women's issues is PolOff Kirsten Bauman who can be contacted at BaumanKS@state.gov or at (30)-210-720-2382. For more information on Post's nominee, contact, Human Rights Officer Patrick Connell at ConnellPD@state.gov or at (30)-210-720-2551.

JUSTIFICATION:

¶2. Eleftheria A. Bernidaki-Aldous was born and raised on the island of Crete. Despite losing her eyesight at the age of three as a result of an accident, she has never slowed in her efforts to bring dignity and equality to the disabled of Greece and beyond. As a nationwide (i.e., at-large) member of a male-dominated parliament, Prof. Bernidaki-Aldous is a member of the Special Standing Committee on Equality and Human Rights. She serves as the Chair of the Special Standing Committee on Issues Concerning the Handicapped and sits on the Standing Committee on Cultural and Educational Affairs. She is a tireless advocate in parliament for the rights of the disabled and an inspiration to young women throughout Greece.

¶3. Prior to joining parliament in 2004, Bernidaki-Aldous was a Professor of Classics at the American College of Greece (Deree College), for 12 years, teaching classical literature and ancient history. Before that, she spent nearly 22 years studying and teaching in the United States, where she earned her Ph.D. in Classics from John Hopkins University. Her dissertation on Sophocles resulted in her highly acclaimed book, "Blindness in a Culture of Light."

¶4. Since taking up her role as a member of parliament, Bernidaki-Aldous' top priority has been to end prejudice against the disabled. In speeches and writings, she has focused on attitudes toward the handicapped. She regularly compares ancient Greek thought to modern U.S. practice with particular emphasis on the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. In December, she approached Embassy Athens to describe

her intent to seek to hold in Athens in 2007 a world-wide conference (under an EU umbrella) on the latest legislative vehicles for promoting physical access and job equality for disabled persons. Embassy will seek to assist her within our capabilities. She is also active in promoting anti-drug education for Greek youth, and recently participated in the American Community School of Athens week long "No to Drugs" event.

15. Through her quiet determination and commitment to Excellence, and through her example to all disabled persons - particularly to women with disabilities in male dominated Societies - Prof. Bernidaki-Aldous continues to inspire and bring hope to the disenfranchised. For these reasons, Embassy Athens recommends her as a candidate for the Secretary's 2007 International Women of Courage award.

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